

Message Text

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61

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /059 W

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R 141735Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6825

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PARIS 1222

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: CANTONAL ELECTIONS IN FRANCE

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE ANNOUNCED ON JANUARY 14 THAT CANTONAL ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE ON MARCH 7 AND 14 OF THIS YEAR, THE FIRST NATIONAL BALLOT SINCE PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING TOOK OFFICE IN 1974. HALF OF FRANCE'S 1,672 CANTONS WILL HOLD ELECTIONS AND THE COUNSELORS SUBSEQUENTLY ELECTED WILL HOLD OFFICE FOR SIX-YEAR TERMS. THE CANTONAL ELECTIONS REPRESENT THE LOWEST LEVEL OF FRENCH NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH CANTONAL ELECTIONS RANK LOW ON THE SCALE OF POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN FRANCE, MANY COMMENTATORS FEEL THAT THE ELECTIONS WILL BE INDICATIVE OF CURRENT PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS THE PARTIES RUNNING. IN FACT, HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT ENTIRELY ACCURATE BECAUSE VERY OFTEN ONLY LOCAL ISSUES ARE AT STAKE AND CONSTITUENTS ARE VOTING MORE FOR PERSONALITIES THAN FOR PARTIES. THE GENERAL COUNCIL CURRENTLY DOES NOT HOLD MUCH REAL POWER, AND WILL NOT DO SO UNTIL REGIONAL REFORM, CURRENTLY AN ISSUE IN FRANCE, IS REALIZED. FURTHERMORE, IN THE CANTONALS, THE INCUMBENT IS FAVORED MORE THAN IN OTHER NATIONAL ELECTIONS, AND PATRONAGE TENDS TO PLAY A STRONG INFLUENCE. ALSO SIGNIFICANT IS THE FACT THAT THE COUNSELORS ARE ELECTED BY A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE BODY OF VOTERS COMPOSED MAINLY OF LOCAL NOTABLES

AND NOT IN A DIRECT PUBLIC ELECTION.

RUSH

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Authority: morefirh
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